

Claim Amendments

Claims 1-17 (previously cancelled)

Claim 18. (currently amended) An expandable bait sleeve comprising:

a sleeve comprised of more than twenty plastic-type strands each having a first end and a second and helically braided together to form a mesh-like configuration defining a plurality of apertures between said plastic-type strands, said sleeve having an interior surface and an exterior surface and a first end and a second end, said plastic-type strands extending from said second end of said sleeve and terminating at said first end of said sleeve, said first end of each said plastic-type strand being fused together with a first end of an opposing plastic-type strand to form an opening defined by said first end of said sleeve, said first end of said sleeve being open and dimensioned to receive a portion of a bait;

wherein said sleeve being sufficiently expandable so as to enlarge to a larger diameter as a bait is inserted into said open first end of said sleeve without applying any force to any other portion of said sleeve to expand said sleeve while at the same time said sleeve is sufficiently rigid so that said bait is retained ~~in by said sleeve by frictional engagement with said~~ interior surface of said sleeve.

Claim 19. (currently amended) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 18 wherein said sleeve ~~plastic-type strands is~~ are comprised of polyethylene terephthalate.

Claim 20. (canceled)

Claim 21. (original) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 18 further comprising:

a fishing line having a first end coupled to a fishing rod and a second end dimensioned to pass through an aperture defined by said second end of said sleeve; and

a fishing hook having a line coupling end and a hook end, said line coupling end being coupled to said second end of said fishing line and said hook end being dimensioned to protrude outside of said open first end of said sleeve.

Claim 22. (original) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 18 further comprising:

a swivel harness having a first end and a second end, said first end of said swivel harness being dimensioned to swivel and being coupled to an outer surface of said second end of said sleeve and being dimensioned to be coupled to a fishing line, said second end of said swivel harness being passed through an inner surface of said second end of said sleeve and being dimensioned to be coupled to a leader;

a leader having a first end and a second end, said first end being coupled to said second end of said swivel harness; and

a fishing hook having a leader coupling end and at least one hook end, said leader coupling end being coupled to said second end of said leader and said at least one hook end being dimensioned to protrude outside of said sleeve.

Claim 23. (previously cancelled) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 18 wherein said second end of said sleeve is molded to a fishing hook so that a line coupling end of said fishing hook is coupled to an inner surface of said second end of said sleeve and a hook end of said fishing hook is dimensioned to protrude outside of an upper portion of said sleeve proximate said second end of said sleeve.

Claim 24. (previously cancelled) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 18 wherein said second end of said sleeve is open so that a bait can be inserted through said open first end of said sleeve and pass through said sleeve so that a portion of said bait protrudes out of said open second end of said sleeve.

Claim 25. (previously cancelled) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 24 further comprising a fishing hook coupled to a center portion of said sleeve and having a line coupling end and a hook end, said hook end protruding out of said center portion of said sleeve and said line coupling end protruding out of said center portion of said sleeve.

Claim 26. (previously cancelled) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 18 further comprising:

a head coupled to said second end of said sleeve, said head defining an aperture in a center portion thereof dimensioned to allow a fishing line to pass therethrough;

at least one fishing hook having a line coupling end and a hook end, said line coupling end being dimensioned to be coupled to a fishing line and said hook end being dimensioned to protrude outside of said sleeve; and

a skirt having a narrow portion and a wide portion, said narrow portion of said skirt being coupled to said head and said wide portion of said skirt being dimensioned to cover at least a portion of said sleeve.

Claim 27. (previously cancelled) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 26 further comprising:

a first fishing hook having a line coupling end and a hook end, said line coupling end being dimensioned to be coupled to a fishing line and said hook end being dimensioned to protrude outside of a center portion of said sleeve; and

a second fishing hook having a line coupling end and a hook end, said line coupling end being dimensioned to be coupled to a fishing line and said hook end being dimensioned to protrude outside of said open first end of said sleeve.

Claim 28. (previously cancelled) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 18 further comprising:

a head coupled to said second end of said sleeve;

a fishing hook having a coupling end and a hook end, said coupling end being dimensioned to be coupled to said head and said hook end being dimensioned to protrude outside of said sleeve;

a skirt having a narrow portion and a wide portion, said narrow portion of said skirt being coupled to said head and said wide portion of said skirt being dimensioned to cover at least a portion of said sleeve;

a substantially L-shaped shaft having a first arm and a second arm and, said first arm being coupled to said head and a center portion of said L-shaped shaft being dimensioned to be coupled to a fishing line;

at least one spinner blade coupled to said second arm of said substantially L-shaped shaft; and

at least one bead coupled to said second arm of said substantially L-shaped shaft.

Claim 29. (previously cancelled) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 18 further comprising:

a crank bait head having a front portion and a rear portion, said front portion being dimensioned to be coupled to a fishing line and said rear portion being coupled to said second end of said sleeve;

a first fishing hook having a first end coupled to said crank bait head and a second end comprising at least one hook;

a wire having a first end and a second end, said first end of said wire being coupled to said crank bait head; and

a second fishing hook having a wire coupling end and a hook end, said wire coupling end being dimensioned to be coupled to said second end of said wire and said hook end protruding outside of said first end of said sleeve.

Claim 30. (previously cancelled) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 18 further comprising:

a harness;

a first fishing hook having a first end and a second end and a center portion therebetween, said first end of said first fishing hook being molded to said harness, said center portion of said first fishing hook being coupled to said second end of said sleeve, and said second end of said first fishing hook comprising at least one hook;

a skirt having a narrow portion and a wide portion, said narrow portion of said skirt being coupled to said harness and said wide portion of said skirt being dimensioned to cover at least a portion of said sleeve and said first fishing hook;

a wire having a first end and a second end, said first end of said wire being coupled to said second end of said sleeve;

a second fishing hook having a wire coupling end and a hook end, said wire coupling end being dimensioned to be coupled to said second end of said wire and said hook end protruding outside of said first end of said sleeve;

a head having a front portion and a rear portion, said rear portion being coupled to said harness;

a shaft having a first end and a second end, said second end
being coupled to said front portion of said head and said first
end being dimensioned to be coupled to a fishing line;
at least one spinner blade coupled to said shaft; and
at least one bead coupled to said shaft.

Claim 31. (previously cancelled) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 18 further comprising, in combination:

a skirt having a narrow portion and a wide portion, said narrow portion of said skirt being coupled to said second end of said sleeve and said wide portion of said skirt being dimensioned to cover at least a portion of said sleeve;

a fishing hook having a coupling end and a hook end, said coupling end being coupled to said second end of said sleeve and said hook end being dimensioned to protrude outside of an upper portion of said sleeve proximate said second end of said sleeve;

a shaft having a first end and a second end, said second end being coupled to said second end of said sleeve and said first end of said shaft being dimensioned to be coupled to a fishing line;

at least one spinner blade coupled to said shaft; and

at least one bead coupled to said shaft.

Claim 32. (currently amended) A method for catching fish comprising, in combination, the steps of:

providing a sleeve comprised of more than twenty plastic-type strands each having a first end and a second and helically braided together to form a mesh-like configuration defining a plurality of apertures between said plastic-type strands, said sleeve having an interior surface and an exterior surface and a first end and a second end, said plastic-type strands extending from said second end of said sleeve and terminating at said first end of said sleeve, said first end of each said plastic-type strand being fused together with a first end of an opposing plastic-type strand to form an opening defined by said first end of said sleeve, said first end of said sleeve being open and dimensioned to receive a portion of a bait;

wherein said sleeve is sufficiently expandable so as to enlarge to a larger diameter when a bait is inserted into said open first end of said sleeve while at the same time said sleeve is sufficiently rigid so that said bait is retained ~~in~~ by said ~~sleeve by frictional engagement with said interior surface of said~~ sleeve;

inserting a portion of bait into said open first end of said sleeve;

providing a fishing line having a first end and a second end,
said second end of said fishing line being dimensioned to pass
through an aperture defined by said second end of said sleeve;
coupling said first end of said fishing line to a fishing
rod;

providing a fishing hook having a line coupling end and a
hook end, said hook end being dimensioned to protrude outside of
said open first end of said sleeve;

coupling said line coupling end of said fishing hook to said
second end of said fishing line; and
casting said sleeve.

Claim 33. (previously cancelled) The method of Claim 32 further comprising the steps of:

providing a first sleeve and a second sleeve each having an interior surface and an exterior surface and an open first end and an open second end;

wherein said first sleeve and said second sleeve are sufficiently expandable to permit said first sleeve and said second sleeve to expand to a larger diameter when a bait is inserted into said open first end of said first sleeve and said second sleeve while at the same time said first sleeve and said second sleeve are sufficiently rigid so that said bait is retained in said first sleeve and said second sleeve by frictional engagement with said interior surface of said first sleeve and said second sleeve;

inserting a bait into said open first end of said first sleeve and through said open second end of said first sleeve and into said open first end of said second sleeve and through said open second end of said second sleeve;

cutting said bait into at least two pieces so that each piece is surrounded by a sleeve.

Claim 34. (previously cancelled) A method for creating an improved soft artificial bait comprising the steps of:

providing a sleeve having an interior surface and an exterior surface and a first end and a second end, said sleeve comprising a mesh-like configuration defining a plurality of apertures;

placing said sleeve in a mold for a soft artificial bait; and

injecting plastisol into said mold to create a soft artificial bait with said sleeve as a skeleton.